Interview with Winifred S. Weislogel

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

WINIFRED S. WEISLOGEL

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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[Note: This transcript was not edited by Ms. Weislogel]

Q: Could you give me a bit about your background. When and where were you born and a bit about your early education and family.

WEISLOGEL: I was born in Irvington, New Jersey on August 8, 1927 and I lived in Elizabeth, New Jersey for most of my formative years. For the last two years of high school my family moved to Roselle, New Jersey which was right next door and I graduated from the High School in Roselle. I spent two years at, in those days we called them Junior Colleges and that was Union Junior College. It's now Union County Community College and when I graduated from there, I went on to Barnard College in New York and got my bachelors degree.

Q: Barnard is now part of Columbia.

WEISLOGEL: It was even then, it was the women's undergraduate school of Columbia University and it still is.

Q: What was your field of study?

WEISLOGEL: My field of study was International Relations and I became interested in the field through a junior high school teacher. He was a civics teacher in the eighth grade when I first met him and, by the way, I had started off in high school in the commercial course. I got secretarial training; I knew shorthand and typing, and we were assigned to various teachers to do work for them...cut stencils — we had stencils in those days, no Xerox machines — and it so happened that in addition to his school work as a teacher, he also was a Quaker, and he ran a youth institute for the American Friends Service Committee. This was a youth institute under international affairs and it was just a summer program of one week held up at Shawnee on the Delaware, Pennsylvania. He was also a minister. He had not been active in the ministry for a while except in the summertime when he went to Vermont and he ran a little church for them in a very small community there. So I became a secretary. I also got interested in international affairs through him, went to the institute of the student seminars, first as his secretary, and then as an actual participant. I think I went to them for four years running, and he was the one who suggested that I go on to college. It was basically through him — we weren't poor, we weren't rich. My father was, by trade, a toolmaker. He became a production foreman with Singer Sewing Machine Company, and he worked there all his life until he retired in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Q: What was your impression of Barnard in the international field of teaching there? This was after the war, wasn't it?

WEISLOGEL: Well, I think I was influenced as much by being in New York City, wanting to be there, wanting to be where the UN headquarters were because we thought the UN would be the solution to all the world's problems in those days.

Q: I went to Williams at the same time. The United Nations was the solution to international problems and unions were the solution to domestic problems.

WEISLOGEL: Probably so, yes. I remember when the UN was first established in New York and they were in the beginning up in New York in the Bronx, it was a branch of

Hunter College I remember, and then Lake Success is where they went next. It was the old Sperry Gyroscope Company and then finally they got their headquarters where it is now, in Manhattan. But I remember going up there in the days when you could go into New York at any hour and not have to worry. I was waiting to get into the UN, because they had a limited number of public tickets, at 3:00 in the morning. I was the first one in line and it was pitch dark. I waited outside until the doors were open for the public to come in. There was a very small number of people because it was a very tiny facility there. I thought at that time we didn't know it would be permanently in New York so I thought well, I might never see it again. So this was my big opportunity.

Q: To catch the spirit of that time, the United Nations, particularly to those involved in college life, really were very enthusiastic about it.

WEISLOGEL: Yes. So that, anyway, was how I got into the field of international relations. I was active in the what we called the Forum Club. It was really a group who liked to talk about international affairs in my junior college. And we had mock UN conferences. I remember the year when we were to represent our school. Each school took a different major country and our school was representing the Soviet Union. So I thought the best way to get information about the position of the Soviet Union on various issues was to go and knock on the door of their UN office in New York and ask them for literature, which I did. I subsequently thought, my God, if anyone was out there taking photographs and later I wanted to join the foreign service, I'd be doomed. But anyway, we did our job and we represented the Soviet Union and we pounded on the table at the appropriate moment.

Q: You graduated when?

WEISLOGEL: In 1949 from Barnard, and, of course, my first objective was to find a job in the international field. So I wrote around to all of the organizations — the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Council on Foreign Relations. Actually, I wrote to about 10 or 15 organizations asking for a job and I was offered one at the Council

on Foreign Relations as a secretary. Of course, I had the secretarial skills which, by the way, were extremely useful all throughout my career for everything from taking notes and preparing term papers and getting jobs in the summertime to finally when I got out of college and got a job there. And of course my idea always was to move on to other things once I got my foot in the door.

Q: This, again to put it in its perspective, in those days going from a fine college, for a woman to go with a degree to get involved in whatever she wanted to do, often the secretarial track was about the only real track to use.

WEISLOGEL: It was, actually, because I didn't have skills for teaching, and I really wasn't interested in teaching — possibly at the college level — and I had ideas of going on anyway and getting an advanced degree, but that was for the moment in abeyance, and editorial work, but I had no experience. This is the thing, you can't get a job in a particular field unless you have some experience, and I figured with the council I could possibly get into the editing of the foreign affairs publications or other research work and that's what interested me at the time.

Q: So you went in in 1949

WEISLOGEL: I went in in '49 and I worked for the summer. It was a permanent job and I expected to stay there but also while I was a senior in college I had applied for a Fulbright Grant. They had announced grants available for Belgium and New Zealand. They had just signed the Fulbright agreements with those countries, and they were opened later than the others which had been in existence for a few years. So I decided to apply for New Zealand. In part because I figured it was so far away that I probably would never be able to afford to get there on my own money, but secondly because my professor, Professor Pierdon, whom I respected very, very much at Barnard, was my principal advisor, his field was British Commonwealth, so I had a kind of a tie in there. He talked a lot about it. So I applied for a grant, and I wanted to study New Zealand external affairs since 1919 — since

the First World War, and how it evolved from dominion status into full-fledged nationhood. So I wrote a little proposal around that idea, submitted it, and I got a call one day from the State Department. In those days the State Department, not USIS, was running the exchange programs, and I was offered the grant. So I quit my job at the council, and I went off to New Zealand on about three weeks notice. They said you've got to get there by the beginning of the school year which was September, they said. I said but no, it's the other side of the world, “down under,” and their school year is different. But they insisted that I be there for the beginning of the school year in September, so I went. I got down there to find myself, naturally, in the third term with most people preparing for their final examinations and the summer vacation coming up.

Q: At which university were you?.

WEISLOGEL: Tago University in Dunedin.

Q: How did that work out?

WEISLOGEL: It worked out fine. They didn't have a department of international relations but they had a history department and I enrolled in the history department with the idea of just taking courses and doing some research on my subject. But then I discovered that if I enrolled the following year and just continued in the regular course of study, I could get my masters. So I did that, and I applied for an extension and received it. So that's what I did, I got my masters in New Zealand and wrote my thesis on the subject.

Q: What was your impression of the New Zealand system of government at the time you were there?

WEISLOGEL: It's asking me to go back for so many years, I don't really remember too much about it. Of course it was famous as a country that took care of people from cradle to grave. They had a very, very good social program, social services, welfare, of course they only had two million people. It was a very, very small country. Also it was like a time

machine, you were going back to the way the United States probably had been maybe in the early 1920s or even before the First World War. I mean in terms of its culture, its outlook on life, the lack of crime — it just practically didn't exist. There were so many things that were quite different. They were a very homogeneous population with the exception of the Maori people, the native New Zealanders, most of whom were in the North Island anyway. I used to say, you walked down the street and everybody was pink and white. You never saw people who were obviously Mediterranean or black. That's something I rather missed about the United States. I discovered how nice it is to have a population that's varied and an atmosphere that's cosmopolitan.

Q: You got your Masters in 1951?

WEISLOGEL: Actually I finished my course in '50 and left the country but the degree was awarded in '51. That's the way the system works there.

Q: Then you came back and...

WEISLOGEL: I came back and I turned in my air tickets. In those days they sent everyone first class, even students. If you traveled on US government orders, you went first class. I traveled on an old super constellation all the way from New York City to Auckland, New Zealand. It took three days at that time. You stopped and refueled in places like Hawaii and the Canton Island, part of the Phoenix Group and Fiji. So it was a long trip. But anyway, I turned that ticket in on the way back and caught a boat and went via Australia all the way around through the Suez Canal and to England. I spent some time in England with friends, a girl who had been a pen pal since I was in junior high school, and I stayed with her and her family in London for several weeks and went with her mother to Paris and then came back to the states.

So then I had to find a job in international relations. If you recall, this would have been in the spring, 1951, and I inquired at the State Department, the CIA; I remember going for an interview in the old CIA building down in Washington, in Foggy Bottom, where the naval

observatory was, and the old brewery was still there. I remember going up to the CIA and I'd had my appointment and so forth and went in to talk to them and at the time I wanted to go back overseas, that was primary. They said there were no jobs but they had something in Biographic Research. We had a nice conversation. By the way, when I went out I was escorted everywhere and I remember coming out it must have been towards the end of the day because I went down to wait for the bus and got on the bus and the gentlemen who I had talked with were right across the way from me and I smiled at them. I was going to start a conversation and they didn't pay any attention to me at all. This was part of the tight security I think. So, I always say I have a fond memory of that.

Q: I recall a 24-page application form on which I had to list every place you lived as a small child. My mother had to fill it out for me I couldn't do it.

WEISLOGEL: No. Of course, I was interested in the State Department but if you recall that era they were not even recruiting. That was the McCarthy era. It was a sad period in our history and practically destroyed the State Department. I don't think they had the examinations for about 4 or 5 years.

Q: I took the examinations in '53 but I didn't get in until about '55, but I was in the military and I was in the first class that they'd really brought together, it was called Junior officer class one.

WEISLOGEL: I took the examination in December 1955. They had given one in the spring of '55 which I didn't know about at the time, I missed it, but I took it in New York in 55 in December and I came into the foreign service in August of 56.

Q: But in the mean time you were back in...

WEISLOGEL: Oh yes, so I put my ideas about the State Department in abeyance and I went to work for the Institute of International Education in New York. They were the people, of course, who administer the Fulbright scholarships both for foreign students and

for Americans and many, many other types of scholarships given by foreign governments. I was working first on the placement of foreign students in the US universities and colleges. And then, about two years later, that would have been about '53, I went into the processing of the American Fulbright student grantees, undergraduates and graduates — but pre-doctorals, and I wound up as the head of the Fulbright Division at the IIE.

Q: This was really a major program in those days.

WEISLOGEL: It was, and what was interesting of course was that I worked very closely with the State Department who managed the program from the State Department's end. They had the contacts with the Fulbright commissions in the various foreign countries and that is now something which I think is run by USIS, USIA.

Q: You were waiting to try the foreign service?

WEISLOGEL: Certainly, the idea never left my thoughts. I was even thinking of possibly trying for something like a foundation. I had done this type of work for about five and a quarter years and I was getting a little tired of it. But it turned out that the way I learned that the examination was being given that December was I was participating in a discussion group for students who were seniors in various colleges, and this was about careers in foreign affairs and travel opportunities, that type of thing. So of course I was speaking on the Fulbright program for American students and one of the other speakers was somebody from the State Department who was a recruiter. They said the exam was being given in December so I went ahead and took the exam

Q: It was a 3 # day exam wasn't it?

WEISLOGEL: No, that was the full day written examination. Followed, if you passed that, by an oral examination. Actually I had my oral examination in San Francisco, quite by chance because I had just arranged a personal trip and they wanted to set up the oral and

I said, “Well I have these plans to go out to the west coast” so they said, “Oh, we have a team out there and we'll interview you there.” So that's what I did.

Q: Just a little bit about recruitment because the foreign service in those days, certainly not exaggerated, was male, practically.

WEISLOGEL: It was.

Q: Did you get any feel when you took the foreign service exam, here you were a female coming in and asking to join the hallowed ranks?

WEISLOGEL: It wasn't that so much as the first question practically out of their mouths was do you have any plans to get married, are you engaged, are you going out with anyone. I mean, the questions that today would be unthinkable. But I remember answering that, “Well I'm not really domestically oriented, I can't see myself staying home and raising a family and being a housewife” and I wanted a career and that was my answer. But that was a question, by the way, that all of the women were asked. Because as it turned out, of those of us who were in the class of August 1956, there were 5 women. In fact they kept remarking upon it the whole time this is the first time that we've ever had a class come in with 5 women out of a class of 30.

Q: I was in a class in July 55 and we were 20 and no women at all.

WEISLOGEL: So you see that this was kind of rocking the boat. I one time just out of curiosity did a little percentage study. I knew all the women of course, and what had become of them. Two of them married men in the class. Of course they had to resign in those days when they got married. But the one couple stayed in for one tour of duty and then left the service. Both of them left, and the other lady came back in the service many years later when she was allowed back under the new regulations (she had been forced to resign). She is doing very well, in fact she is a senior career officer now. The other three, including myself, continued on and have retired, and we did our bit. And if you look at it

percentage wise, four out of five women of a class of 30 stayed with it until the end. Out of the men the percentage who left for one reason or another was much, much higher. I can't remember now what it was. In those days, this was their concern. They said we invest all of this time and money and effort into you and you are going to go off and get married and leave us, and here we've wasted our resources on you. That was a very popular view at that time.

Q: I remember it well. As a matter of fact, it was some time before I started running into colleagues who were women officers. It was a male organization.

WEISLOGEL: And another thing that happened very often to women, oh they had a ball as soon as they saw me, they said you're ideal for our international exchange program, IES, naturally. So I was on the other end of the telephone talking to my former colleagues at IIE in New York and the other women I know one of them was immediately made a disbursing officer Here she was, she was a graduate of economics and she was made a disbursing officer. I guess because she knew the difference between dimes, nickels and pennies and this is what did happen to women. They pushed them in to the...

Q: Or into the consular ranks, I was a consular officer.

WEISLOGEL: Well everyone had to do consular work and that I never had any objection to. I thought that was something that everybody should know.

Q: Then you were in the State Department from 1956 to 1959.

WEISLOGEL: Yes, first in IES and then, I guess I complained so bitterly I made a bit of noise and rocked the boat, rattled my chains, so they found there was an opening in UNESCO relations. In those days, again, our relations with UNESCO were handled within the State Department and Cultural Affairs. So I was made Cultural Officer for that area that dealt with UNESCO, and I worked there for the rest of the time I was in Washington on my first tour. I loved it actually.

Q: UNESCO for the last decade or more has had a very bad reputation because of both its mismanagement and its political leanings.

WEISLOGEL: Yes, it's being used as a political tool and many countries attempt to use it to their own ends. I remember there were absolutely ridiculous projects on even when I was there although in those days I think UNESCO had a good reputation and we were trying to do cultural cooperation projects and activities in other countries. But one of the projects I remember particularly well was going to be a history of the world, of mankind, from the very earliest beginnings under the sponsorship of UNESCO, and this was a book that ideally would be used in all schools throughout the world and they would show no biases whatsoever and everybody would love everybody else. You know the sort of idealism that went into this. Well, I remember we got the manuscripts for the first book. The first book was on prehistoric man and the manuscripts were circulated among authorities who had agreed to look at the manuscripts from various countries and I remember that the section on prehistoric man. Dr. Preistly was, I believe, an anthropologist expert in England and Carleton Coon, the revered father of Carl Coon, who was our ambassador to Nepal, the two of them disagreed over the contents and do you know what they were disagreeing about — over whether prehistoric man walked with a stoop or walked upright and the vilification, the insults, the brouhaha that occurred over this particular point of contention. And I thought, my God, if they can't agree on whether prehistoric man walked upright or with a stoop, what are they ever going to do when they come to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries' political and economic philosophers. Well, that's the last I think we ever heard of the project. It just fell apart. But I mean that was the type of thinking really that they had at that time and they really thought that this was a logical project that would be of great value to the world.

Q: It shows a bit of the spirit, though. That the people were still thinking that maybe they could do something and come up with some sort of compromise.

WEISLOGEL: Sure, if everybody just loved and understood one another's culture, why, all would be right with the world and of course I had a lot of that in me too, especially going back to the Friends Service Committee, the view of the Quakers anyway, their orientation towards pacifism and of human brotherhood. This was a very strong element I think at that time in my life and I think in the lives of a lot of other people who were interested in international relations. But some of us became quickly disillusioned.

Q: What was the feeling about UNESCO, you might say, from other elements within the State Department. When you tell people you were dealing with UNESCO, would they roll their eyes up or..

WEISLOGEL: If they did, I wasn't really aware of it, but I did know that it wasn't the mainstream, by any means, and I think the State Department did sort of want to shut it off as eventually happened when the USIA took it over. And then of course we had our big spat with UNESCO but that didn't come for a long time after that. But as a job I enjoyed it thoroughly because I am very much interested in the arts, museums, music, theater, they were all under our jurisdiction. We were doing things like collecting paintings by school children from around the world and organizing exhibits. We didn't do that in the State Department. We kind of coordinated what private groups were doing and we worked with the American Association of Museums and various art organizations. I mean, you name it, everybody was in the act somewhere. So for me it was a lot of fun. I loved the job, absolutely loved it.

Q: Well, then, how did your overseas assignment come about?

WEISLOGEL: By the way, I was living in Washington. I don't know where the interest first occurred, but I decided I'd like to learn Arabic. Maybe because esthetically it looked like a beautiful language and I wanted to know what these funny little squiggles were saying. But for whatever reason we had a new mosque built in Washington around that time and they were offering classes to the public in Arabic. So I went to the classes, and I began

my studies of Arabic there, learned the basics of the language and the grammar. It was taught by the man who was the director of the mosque and the attached school. They also ran a school for Arabic speaking children of diplomats in Washington. So that was where I started Arabic. Originally, when I was putting in my request for assignment, I was torn because I wanted an Arabic country. That eventually won out, but I also was still interested in the Pacific Islands and the Trust Territories. That was kind of a secondary interest, but I did apply for an Arabic speaking country — so I got Geneva Switzerland. And I still have a letter which I treasure which I received, and I was very disappointed. Imagine anybody being disappointed about going to Geneva . If I had to go now in the foreign service, go to Geneva, I think I really would be disappointed because I don't think I could survive financially. But in those days the dollar really was worth a dollar, not only that but I think we got about 4.7 Swiss francs to a dollar which is now down to nothing and you could live and you could travel in your vacation times while you lived in a city like Geneva.

Q: I remember in that era my wife and I traveled around Europe and I have a diary saying it was costing us a lot of money. It was running almost $10 a day for two of us. This is with train travel.

WEISLOGEL: But anyway, I took my assignment, it was consular officer. In those days we had a consulate general in Geneva. That was subsequently abolished. All the consular functions, except for those involving visas for foreign diplomats who were assigned to the UN in Geneva, were transferred to Bern and Zurich.

Q: What were you doing then?

WEISLOGEL: Strictly a counselor assignment — that's where I learned the ropes. There were two men that I remember very fondly, John Bywater and Stan Lawson. They were old time consular officers. I don't think they even came in through the exam system, I think they came up the ranks. They knew all the tricks of the trade and they were great people to learn from. Stan Lawson in particular was very old school, a very courtly

gentleman who could teach a person a great deal about the protocol as well as about the job requirements.

Q: Any great consular problems you had to deal with while you were doing this?

WEISLOGEL: Great consular problems....I remember there was one very, very well known. I don't even remember his name, if I did I probably wouldn't say it, but he was a nuclear physicist from the United States and he kind of went around the bend. He thought the US foreign policy was wrong and he decided to defect to the Russians. But somehow or other he came in and told us about his plans and I remember going in sort of a panic to the consul general and saying, what do we do about this thing, and he said well, you know, he's a free citizen, he's pretty much free to, we can't stop him. We don't have a police force. I learned a few things about the limitations. I always did say though, for somebody who's going into consular work a degree in social work would be a lot more useful than a degree in international relations. Because, I had cases, I had a woman the Swiss authorities were very much concerned with because she was living in a hotel with her young son. He was about 9, 10 years old and she had a drinking problem they said, very serious. But they weren't worried about that so much as long as she paid her hotel bill of course the Swiss could care less, but what worried them was that the boy was not going to school. So they reported it to us and of course I went along to see her and it is the classic story of the alcoholic. She had perfume bottles in the room filled with booze, under her bed littered with empty bottles, and her little son. She had been taken away, she was so drunk. They had removed her anyway, she was causing a disturbance, but the little boy we interviewed and he said that he went out at night and put empty bottles in front of other people's doors so that they wouldn't know that his mother was drinking. That was really sad. Fortunately, the family had money, and the grandparents agreed to pay for the boy's tuition and board at the local international school in Geneva. So we stowed him there and we managed to get the woman into a clinic where she was supposed to dry out. But

that was really a case. That was terrible. Talk about the classic situation, in the movie Lost Weekend where they hid the bottles in the chandelier.

Q: Come fill the cup, I think or something like that. So, anyway, it was one of those situations.

WEISLOGEL: It was one of those situations, yes.

Q: Were you still pushing towards the pacific or Arabic?

WEISLOGEL: I was pushing towards Arabic. Then I continued through, Ambassador Villard knew of this man, I think...

Q: This is Henry Villard.

WEISLOGEL: Henry Villard, he was there at the time. He was the Administer.

Q: He's still going in Los Angeles. We've interviewed him. His son interviewed him.

WEISLOGEL: His son at the time was at a private school outside of Geneva and they had a professor who came and taught Arabic to the sons of Arabs so that they would keep up with their native tongue. I was looking for an Arabic teacher so I was referred to him and he gave me lessons. Finally I met another couple, one of them as it turned out was a woman that they had me meet and we agreed to exchange our Arabic and English lessons, who turned out to be the wife of one of the very top chiefs of the Muslim brotherhood. He was in exile from Egypt, and he had taken refuge in Geneva but he was still active in the brotherhood. So I met a lot of interesting people through him. I also got to know a lot of the Algerian exiles; this was before the Algerian independence, the Evian meetings were going on. In fact, I remember giving a visa to a man who was just one of the students, but we were targeting them at that time with the idea that if Algeria gains its independence, it would be a good idea to have some contacts with the leadership. And

these people, obviously the educated Algerians, with foreign experience, were going to be the new leadership.

Q: I was just interviewing John Baker yesterday, who was working on this and mentioned this in Washington how we were giving visas to young Algerians we thought would be leaders but putting it under the national student association or something like that so that we could have a little distance from this sponsorship so we wouldn't get the French too upset.

WEISLOGEL: That's correct. I remember I think I jumped the gun on one of the visas and I got my knuckles rapped properly for it because I was supposed to wait for the clearance and here the guy was going to get on the plane in two days. Of course that shouldn't have been a factor and I was still pretty inexperienced but anyway it turned out okay and he got his visa along with a lot of the others. But many years later, this was while I was on the Algerian desk in Washington, I went over for a conference in Algeria, Bill Eagleton was the Charg# d'affaires. At that time we did not have diplomatic relations yet with Algeria and we were under the auspices of the Swiss embassy. But Bill had a little get together and I was present along with, I think he was the director of American affairs in the foreign ministry and we got talking about the early days and his background. I said, “You studied in the United States, when did you get your visa?”, he said, “Well, in such and such a year.” I said, “I think I was in Geneva at that time and I bet I gave you your visa for the states.” He said, “I have my passport here”, and by golly, there the visa was in his passport. He had been one of those students. He had subsequently become the Director of American Affairs in their foreign ministry and, by the way, the Swiss Ambassador was also present at this little gathering and there I had been in his country at the time that I gave the visa, so we all got quite a laugh out of it. But it goes to show that, yes, some of these young people are well chosen and they do attain positions of importance.

Q: Were you encouraged by the consulate general to take Arabic lessons?

WEISLOGEL: Yes, I never had any problem in the consulate itself. I did this on my own so it was my own business, in fact I think they were rather intrigued by the fact that I had a few contacts with some interesting Arab people in Geneva. But of course I applied formally for the Arabic language training. I still have the letter. They turned me down cold. They said we do not think that women have any future in the Arab world because of the local attitude towards women and therefore your request is being turned down, but thank you for your interest.

Q: This is used all over the place, almost everywhere you turn.

WEISLOGEL: I wouldn't have argued with them for a place like Saudi Arabia, probably this is still not feasible, you're not going to get anywhere if the local people don't accept you. But as I went on to another assignment, I did get my Arabic assignment. I was sent to Libya next, of course, as personnel officer which I had no background for and no special interest in but I was also backup consular officer there and I did have to deal with local authorities on several occasions, many occasions. I never had any trouble at all because I was a woman, never. That was one of the more conservative countries.

Q: Usually it's not the person, it's the country they're representing.

WEISLOGEL: This is it. I probably have less of a problem, because, first of all, they look at me and they know I'm not a local woman. I don't look like an Arab. Secondly, they just simply put me into a neuter category. Whereas women who have been places in South America have said that they have had a lot more problems being accepted on professional grounds because they can be mistaken for local women and if they don't behave like local women then they are regarded as something else, but certainly not as professionals in the foreign service.

Q: You went to Tripoli and Benghazi where you served from '61 to '63. Could you tell about what the situation was like there?

WEISLOGEL: As far as the political situation that was BQ, before Qadhafi, and it was a kingdom, as you remember, there was King Idriss and his entourage of people. Actually, he was a sort of a remote figure in many ways. You didn't get the same feeling about King Idriss as you did about the King of Morocco, for instance. Later on when I was living in Morocco it was a totally different situation. There were people in the royal establishment, including somebody they called the Black Prince who was a bit of an evil character, who had made a tremendous amount of money out of scrap metal left over from the war and parlayed that into a great fortune. There was a lot of graft, a lot of corruption, but it was still a very small country. This was before oil, by the way. When I arrived in December 1961, the first barrel of oil had been shipped out of Libya just around that time, because I remember that the oil company gave the King a little hollowed-out oil tanker in pure gold and inside was some drops of oil from the well. Then I think the next company gave him a little oil barrel filled with some oil. So that was early in the game, we still had an AID mission. Imagine, aid to Libya. That, and the Wheelus Air Force Base, of course. Our big interest in Libya in those days was maintaining Wheelus Air Force Base. The British had bases in Benghazi and out in Tobruk and we were using the facilities for flight training because of the fine weather. It was a great place to train pilots but also it was a base on the Mediterranean — another place where we could keep a handle, we thought, on Russian encroachments into the Mediterranean or into the Arab world. As I said, that was our primary interest. My own work was personnel work at the embassy. I was made personnel officer. That was not my favorite assignment. I was quite vocal about it I'm afraid.

Q: Were you able to work on your Arabic while you were there?

WEISLOGEL: Oh yes. I took Arabic at the embassy. They give regular classes and I continued my own studies. And then out of the clear blue sky one day in late 1960 I got a letter from the State Department saying they had decided to assign me to the Arabic language training program in Tangier.

Q: This would have been '63

WEISLOGEL: No, it would have been sometime in 1962 because that's why my assignment was shortened and in July '63 I moved on to Arabic.

Q: Also, looking at your biographic register, you were in Benghazi. Is this part of the normal...

WEISLOGEL: Every two years the capital moved. What was really happening was that the King's father had made a pilgrimage to Mecca and had stopped in a place called Beida along the way. Beida is up in what they call the Jebel Akhdar, the green mountain area, it's a very hilly and very beautiful area of Libya which at one time was the bread basket of the Roman Empire. People don't realize that they had wonderful agricultural soil, and they grew grains and all kinds of things up on the plateau. That's where it isn't so hot and the rainfall is better. But in those days because Libya was formed of three units, the lower part, the Fezzan, had been French and then, of course, you had the Italians there until the war. Well, they lost it after the war and it had been the British who were administering it. There was always a lot of rivalry between Tripoli and Benghazi anyway. Even culturally the people are somewhat different. They decided in order to keep peace to move the capital at least back and forth every two years between Tripoli and Benghazi. Of course, we're not nomads like many of them are so whenever we move it meant moving entire consulates and embassies and that was a pretty big job. Then in the meantime he was planning a capital in Beida up in the mountain in honor of his great granddaddy who had stopped there on the pilgrimage and it was beginning to grow. I remember the first thing they built was, I think, a stadium with mainland Chinese help. The Chinese always went in for rather large, flashy projects, so this was a big stadium. But I left just about that time so I never got to transfer to Beida, but we had a few people stationed up there.

Q: Just a little more about the embassy. John Wesley Jones was the ambassador.

WEISLOGEL: He was there when I first arrived and for most of the time.

Q: How did he operate, what did you think his..

WEISLOGEL: J. Wesley Jones? Very low key sort of person, but I think he had good contacts with the Libyan establishment for what it was worth. I was not doing political work, I wasn't doing economic work, so I don't even recall what kind of reports were going out of there, but I don't think in those days it would have been looked upon with favor if he made a lot of contacts with the people who eventually came into power. The military types. I don't even know whether our people at Wheelus had very good contacts with the Libyan military. It was living in a world apart. We really did live in a world apart there. It was very difficult to make contacts in the Libyan community. The women were very segregated in their own culture. You did not entertain and were not entertained by Libyans. In fact, women got to see homes and meet more people than the average man did because we could cross that barrier that they could not cross. But I would be very much surprised if someone were to tell me that, Oh yes, we had all sorts of good contacts, we knew that this was going to come sooner or later in Libya, that a Qadhafi would come to the forefront, and that he would...

Q: This wasn't in the atmosphere.

WEISLOGEL: It wasn't in the atmosphere at all. I think we thought that King Idriss wouldn't be there forever because at the time he was quite an elderly man. We were debating that it would be Black Prince or one of his rivals who would succeed to the throne. This was the sort of thing they were talking about. We weren't talking about a Qadhafi.

Q: Lets talk a bit about your language training. You were going to Tangier.

WEISLOGEL: That's right.

Q: Normally the language school is in Beirut.

WEISLOGEL: Ah, but they had established one in Tangier, and I guess by the time I got there it had been going on for...I think there had been one or two previous courses, meaning that it had been in operation for about a year, year and a half. They did that because they found they wanted speakers of the North African dialect and people familiar with the North African area as opposed to the old standard Middle east which included Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Saudia Arabia.

Q: North African dialect would go from where to where?

WEISLOGEL: Actually Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria are pretty interchangeable. There are some differences, but they're not major.

Q: How about Libya?

WEISLOGEL: Libya is kind betwixt and between. I found that the dialect in Libya was more akin to what you would find in Southern Morocco and the Algerian desert areas. In other words the desert dialect seemed to cross and be fairly standardized in the more southerly parts and then, of course, the northern parts and the coastal regions were mutually understandable. There was no real problem and with a background in classical you could always make out all right.

Q: Describe a bit of the setting and the school, because I think this is an interesting school. There were some problems with it.

WEISLOGEL: That's the old, well you mean the building itself.

Q: How the course was set up, too, but the setting first.

WEISLOGEL: The setting, of course, was the old legation. It's the oldest US government-owned property in the world. It was given to us by the Sultan of Morocco in the late 1700s, 1789 or 1798 something like that. In fact it's now the TALM, the Tangier American

Legation Museum. I'm on the board of that and we run it as a museum library and a conference center, and it's absolutely beautiful. A lot of it has been renovated considerably since I was there and since the Peace Corps had it, but it was set up as I think most of the courses have been. The first concentration was on the spoken language. We didn't even see the script for quite a while. We did phonetic reading of our phrases that we learned by rote. It's the same system that's used throughout the world where you learn by repeating over and over again certain sentences, interchanging words and interchanging phrases, putting it in the past, putting it in the future, substituting various nouns, and it works, it's a good system, I think.

Q: How big was your class?

WEISLOGEL: I think we had five or six people in the class, and at the time I was there I think we had two classes underway. One of the groups was sort of finishing up. They were in their last three months and were just beginning, and the course was for 21 months all told.

Q: How did you find the course? I've talked to some people, I'm not sure if it's this time or later, but they were rather unhappy with the instructors. They felt that they really weren't that committed or something.

WEISLOGEL: I would say that about one of the teachers only. None of us thought that he was very good. But the two Moroccans that we had for the longest time were excellent and one of them in particular was outstanding. He was really very, very good. There was another man who came in who subsequently joined the diplomatic service of Morocco, but he was at the time waiting I think to go in or he was out of college. He was a wonderful instructor. He was very, very well liked and unfortunately he was in the diplomatic service a few years and was one of the diplomats who was killed when that Pan Am plane was bombed in Rome. He was on a mission at the time and happened to be in the wrong place, but he was a wonderful person and very, very competent as a teacher.

Q: You had the distinction of being the first woman to take Arabic.

WEISLOGEL: To take it as a full-time subject, yes.

Q: Was there any to-do made about it?

WEISLOGEL: No, certainly in the class, my colleagues, we got on fine. There was no problem whatsoever in that respect. Some people were faster, some were slower than others, some people are just geniuses at languages, other have to work awfully hard.

Q: As one who suffered, I'm at the lower end of the spectrum. I've taken a number. It's very discouraging.

WEISLOGEL: I'm not a person who learns easily by ear. I like written things. I can absorb better through my eyes than through my ears so the rote system for me was difficult when we got on the classics. Of course, I had a little bit of a head start there because I learned some of the basics, but still it was hard work. I enjoyed it.

Q: Were you getting any feel for the history of the culture and all that as you went or was...

WEISLOGEL: You sort of picked it up as you went along. It was not done formally. We did have a book allowance. We got books. Tangier is not a typical Arab city. Tangier is a case by itself. It was an international city; it collects all sorts of human beings from lots of different cultures, lots of people who are paid by their wealthy families just to stay out of the way and they land in Tangier.

Q: It really is the remittance man and the remittance woman place.

WEISLOGEL: Oh very much so, yes

Q: At least, at that time, I also have the impression that there was a very dissolute wealthy society hanging around there with all sorts of tastes, did that intrude at all?

WEISLOGEL: It didn't intrude. It might have been a temptation for people in the class who had an inclination in that direction. I could think of two people who probably were not assisted in their problems by the fact that they were in Tangier. They would have been better off in somewhere like Mecca. But we did learn a lot from our teachers. They were, after all, Arabs. One man was married while we were there to a Spanish girl that he had gone with for a long time and his own family wasn't too pleased, but one of our officers gave them the wedding reception. He was our favorite teacher, he was a great guy. We had a very good relationship with the teachers. We learned a lot from them just because we talked a lot. We spent a lot of time together, after all we were spending six hours a day with these teachers and part of the job too was to have a general conversation — not just stick to the texts. So we would talk a little bit about personal lives and views on various subjects. I think one of the teachers was rather conservative, and we always remember one of them coming out of the men's room during Ramadan with his jaws working that we knew darn well he had had a sandwich while he was in there.

Q: On this subject, one of the charges that has been levied against the State Department "Arabists" is that they are anti-Israeli, anti-Semitic, etc. I mean here you had a class overlap with another class. Could you comment on what your impression was of those who were taking Arabic and the view towards Israel because this was the predominant issue of our time in the Arab world.

WEISLOGEL: I'm trying to think of the make up of our own group. I think one person was Jewish in our class. I'm pretty sure he was. Actually he was a very, very fine linguist. He was very adept.

Q: Who is this?

WEISLOGEL: David Korn and he subsequently went on to study Hebrew.

Q: Hebrew, yes he studied both.

WEISLOGEL: And I think he served in the area. I kind of lost track of him and his career.

Q: Yes, I've interviewed him.

WEISLOGEL: But I would say yes, there was sympathy. I think people are drawn to the language because of an interest in the people and all. You can't help but be sympathetic and naturally our own government policy has been so pro-Israel, I mean the Israelis could do nothing wrong whatsoever, that it didn't hurt to have a few people around who said, well look there is another viewpoint here. We would talk among ourselves. I think the sympathies generally were for the Arabs. Annoyance also at the fact that they are so much in disarray, that they squabble among themselves continuously, that they are rather inept very often when it comes to managing affairs. I mean we could just see them shooting themselves in the foot every time they turned around, doing all the wrong things. If they want to make friends, influence our policy, everything they did was wrong. Sometimes you just shake your head and give up in disgust.

Q: My language specialty was Serbian and I'm going through that right now. The Serbs are making absolute pariahs out of themselves in the international community over what they're doing in the former parts of the Yugoslav area. As part of the language scene you can't help but identify to a certain extent. It's not so much that you support everything they do, but you've spent a lot of time with this that you wish them well and to see ineptness one can take kind of personally.

WEISLOGEL: You can, yes. Well this whole business of Morocco when they went off on their Green March down into the Spanish Sahara and all, the whole thing has been a disaster for years, really. Although now it looks as if they're getting their way. But it's cost a lot. I happen to know a lady whose daughter is a physician, they're Moroccan, and got a little bit of feedback from the military hospital where she was working during her internship. She said that the public has no idea of the quantity of casualties that were occurring in that war. That was the fight against the Polisario, Algerians supporting the independence of

the Spanish Sahara, of course they had a political interest in doing so, and the Moroccans wanting to annex it as part of Morocco.

Q: What about the Algerian situation while you were in the language school?

WEISLOGEL: When I left Benghazi to come to Morocco a friend and I drove across. That was one year after Algerian independence, a trip we never could have made during the fighting and the bombings and so forth. But Algeria had its independence in, I believe, was it 62?

Q: Something like that.

WEISLOGEL: So we drove across at that time. Again, there were very, very high hopes for Algeria. First of all there was a very well trained nucleus of people with a lot of, the French and even some English and American, trading in the background. Although they say that the country actually lacked for a lot of trained personnel, doctors and technicians of various kids, and engineers. I mean the French had done all that kind of work, so that the Algerians were left having to build up from scratch, so to speak. But they're savvy people. They're quite different, by the way. You take the Algerians and compare them with the Tunisians and the Moroccans. The Moroccans and Tunisians are much more akin, I think, in culture and just general outlook than the Algerians.

Q: I've always heard that the Algerians are quite dour.

WEISLOGEL: They are, they can be, yes, dour and I mean they're always struggling or fighting or asserting something. I find them very interesting people. They can't even take the whole of North Africa as a unit though because Turks only got as far as Tlemcen in Algeria, Morocco never had any Turkish incursions or occupation and therefore they've had a long tradition of freedom of their own independence under their own King. Yes, the French were there and so were the Spanish in the north but neither did too much the basic structure. I mean the Moroccans and the Tunisians still ran their country when it came to

personal matters, marriage, divorce, inheritance, it was all done under the Muslim law. So it was quite different from Algeria which was treated like a province of France.

Q: Did the Writ of Morocco run very strong in Tangier or not while you were there, from Rabat?

WEISLOGEL: No, of course we had a consulate general in those days in Tangier and they kind of looked over, took care of us. We, I think, pulled duty if I remember correctly. We took our turns as duty officers just to relieve the consulate because there were only three people there, three Americans. But otherwise, socially we saw one another, but we didn't get involved in reporting or input into reporting from the consulate or anything like that. No, we were strictly students.

Q: You went there for 23 months?

WEISLOGEL: 21 months, then of course I got assigned to Rabat.

Q: Where you served from 65-70.

WEISLOGEL: In two different jobs.

Q: What were you doing?

WEISLOGEL: I was assigned there first as consular officer. The consular section really consisted of me and I think one full time local and one part time local. So it was a small section. We did not do immigrant visas but we did all the others.

Q: Wasn't that hippie heaven at that time?

WEISLOGEL: No, Tangier was more so, you got a lot of hippies up in Tangier but a lot of them just didn't get down as far as Rabat. Rabat wasn't a problem in that respect and you had a lot of people of course from the military base. We had the military base at Kenitra

Navy Base but those people were handled by the military. We didn't have anything to do with them so it was fairly routine welfare and whereabouts, births and deaths and the usual chores. You had your occasional welfare case. I still remember Mr. Duck. Mr. Duck was a welfare case. He was down and out. He'd committed, oh I know he tried to hold up a taxi driver and of course having a gun in Morocco is a military crime. You're tried before the military courts. Nobody has firearms. So anyway, he was found with this and he was waiting trial, but meanwhile they just took his passport away and let him loose and he was sleeping on a park bench. He had his shoes stolen while he was sleeping and he came into my office. Can you imagine having this man announce this Mr. Duck? He came into the office and had on a pair of Moroccan baboosh, these yellow slippers and, of course, there he came padding into my office on these slippers and his name was Mr. Duck. I had all I could do to keep from rolling under the desk with laughter.

Q: What was the situation in Morocco in the '65 to '70 period?

WEISLOGEL: There were a few occasions I remember, this was before the two attempts on the king's life, I left and one year after I left, the famous coup at the King's palace at Skhirat, the birthday party, and then next time when his plane was attacked. I always said, by the way, that was one of the best advertisements that Boeing aircraft could possibly have had. Just leave the aircraft that he was traveling in at that time on the ground in Rabat where I saw it about a year later. I went through there and the plane of course was just shot full of holes, a big hole in the wing and everything, and I said if that thing was able to withstand the attack and land, they ought to just leave it there.

Q: Was it relatively stable?

WEISLOGEL: It was relatively stable, but you were having problems. There was a man, I can't remember the name anymore, but he, I think, had taken refuge in France. But the French weren't able to capture him and he was believed to be back in Morocco. Of course, there are always plots against the King. I mean they knew that there were people who

were plotting to overthrow the government, and I remember, on a couple of occasions at least, where they were looking for one of these anti-royalist agitators and we would travel and we'd suddenly come up against road blocks. What they did was shove a board across the road that had nails, big spikes, about four inches long, sticking up and you had to stop at these road blocks which could be anywhere and they would go through the car. They'd look in the glove compartments, and I said I don't know whether Ben Barka was hiding in there or not. It was quite unlikely. But they stopped all cars including diplomatic cars looking for him. And that happened on several occasions. I did a lot of traveling in the country. I was all over the place in Morocco. On many occasions, you did have these road blocks.

Q: What was the impression of King Hassan? From what I gather he's gone through several periods like anyone.

WEISLOGEL: Of course, everybody always shook their heads and said, oh he's not like his father. Of course, Mohammed V had practically reached a sanctified position, but the son as a young man I think had had a playboy reputation. He was devoted to golf, in fact, we had an administrative officer, Frank Hazard, who was a scratch golfer, excellent golfer, and the King found out about him and every once in a while Frank would just have to drop his work and go over. The King summoned him to play a round of golf. We then called him our golf attach#. But it was a nice entree. There was also talk about the succession. Of course, the King had this young son who was a mere boy, but he had a brother who had certain ambitions and there was some suspicion of him. It turned out that it probably wasn't likely that he could have commanded any kind of following. He had many, many personal failings moral and otherwise. He's dead now.

Q: What were relations..

WEISLOGEL: Relations were very good. Most of the time that I was there, in fact, just about all but the last four months when Stuart Rockwell came on board, but the rest of the

time Ambassador Tasca was there. I liked him very, very much. I got on extremely well with Ambassador Tasca. I had the greatest respect for him.

Q: Could you talk about his style of operation?

WEISLOGEL: His style of operation was one that I appreciated. He did not hang over your shoulder and tell you what to do. He assumed you would carry out your work as you should and he did not breathe down your neck and keep telling you to do this and not do that and so forth. I appreciated that. I was doing economic work, of course he was an economist, that was his field, he had a Ph.D. in economics. But I also had very, very good bosses there I should say; Ed Dow and then Mr. White, He was there when I left but Ed Dow was the one who was there most of the time. And by the way, he also supervised me as a consular officer. Now, as head of the consular section I was on the country team and I was supervised by Ed Dow because Leon Durso, who was our DCM, somehow or other didn't have a feel or he had never done consular, I don't know what the reason was, but he did not supervise the consular section. He turned it over to Ed Dow. So I worked very closely with Ed Dow over a period of time. In fact, he was the one who asked for me when my predecessor in the economic section left. He asked that I be moved into the economic section to work for him.

Q: Harry Tasca had a reputation for being a very difficult person and, of course, there was Mrs. Tasca who was one of the dragons of the foreign service.

WEISLOGEL: That's another story entirely. Again she wasn't there most of the time. She spent her time in Rome so actually she didn't get into our hair very much. But when she was there she did. I know his secretary very well, one of my best friends. She did have her problems and so did the protocol secretary when she was in town.

Q: I served for four years with Harry Tasca when he left in Greece.

WEISLOGEL: Oh, did you really? Then you knew Gwen in Greece?

Q: Yes.

WEISLOGEL: She went with him there. She's my best friend, really. She's the person I spend most of my time with.

Q: Gwen is a fine secretary. She was able to handle it. I never had any problems with him either.

WEISLOGEL: But I enjoyed working for him.

Q: I kept away from Mrs. Tasca.

WEISLOGEL: He was criticized sometimes. This is where you get into this delicate new area of families and what wives should do and so forth, but Ambassador Tasca was there very often alone. For a while he had Ethel Dietrich who was a dollar-a-year woman. Did you know any thing about her?

Q: No.

WEISLOGEL: I believe she had been a teacher at Wellesley or Bryn Mawr in economics and then she worked for the government. And now she'd come back to be his sort of economic aide, but I think she was working for peanuts if anything at all. And maybe they paid her way over. So Ethel was there sort of fulfilling the role of somebody who could sit at the table and be his hostess. But Ambassador Tasca, not having his wife there, would often call on the wife of one of the military attach#s who happened to be a very lovely, very well-bred woman who could entertain nicely. And then he would often, in an Arab country you'd never quite know who's going to come whether somebody was going to bring his brother or whether wives will or will not come, would invite many of us, men and women who were working in the embassy to the parties to the cocktail party reception, part of it, and then when they were going to sit down to the formal dinner, if there were empty spaces we would fill in. I never objected to anything like that. Now some of the women

did not like it when their husbands were asked to stay and they themselves went home or vice-versa.

Q: They didn't understand the situation.

WEISLOGEL: That's the business of the country. You have to sort of fit in and assist where you can and it's all part of the job. So I never objected to that but some people did rather strongly.

Q: What about when you're doing economic work or how did you find the economy and also the infrastructure dealing with statistics and that sort of thing.

WEISLOGEL: The infrastructure in Morocco was very good. The infrastructure was better than most of the developing countries. It was left with a good telephone system, good road network, the communications worked, telephone, telegraphs, whatever, worked very well. I understand there has been deterioration rather than improvement. You had good air service, you had excellent train service between the major cities so you had something to work with. We had statistics published in both Arabic and French, and I didn't do a lot of that statistical analysis. I didn't have to. I was doing the commercial and reports on the economy in terms of industry, agriculture, that type of thing. It wasn't a difficult place to work in.

Q: How about the bureaucracy dealing with it?

WEISLOGEL: There again, if you are talking about my going in and asking questions, they were cooperative.

Q: Again, we keep coming back to this woman thing, but that's only one side, but also just dealing with them because in some Arab countries this can be very difficult for anyone because they just don't operate...

WEISLOGEL: Yes, or they don't have the information. You did have to chase around. I always felt that Arabs did not like to deal with people over the telephone. They're not telephone people. They want to deal face to face, and if you are going to go and ask or if you want something, you go to somebody's office, you make an appointment and you go see them. You're not going to get very far over the telephone. You can't just do like we do, just pick it up and ask a question. So that's one thing you learn. You deal with people personally, and it takes a lot more time. Sometimes you make an appointment and you go there and they're not there. Well, they've been called home because a child is sick or God knows what. They're very family oriented and that takes precedence over everything else. And I always found that I could get through to people as far as going to see them without much difficulty. I think it's much harder for their own people to do so. They can treat their own people miserably when they're in positions of certain importance and, say a local citizen comes in and tries to get information or needs help, they're not always helpful to them.

Q: You were there in '67 during the Six-day War with Israel.

WEISLOGEL: Yes.

Q: That was a terrible blow to the Arab world because the Israelis really defeated the Egyptians, the Syrians and Jordanians and took over Jerusalem and the West Bank.

WEISLOGEL: Yes, the whole thing.

Q: It was a terrible blow.

WEISLOGEL: It changed the picture.

Q: How did that reflect...

WEISLOGEL: There again, Morocco was never as much in the thick of it as the other countries were. We had people who had to be evacuated at that time from Algeria, but they never even talked about possible evacuation from Morocco. It wasn't in the cards. You never felt threatened. Now I understand during later incidents the feeling against foreigners is growing. The resentment is growing. I hear from friends regularly in Morocco. They do have this growing fundamentalist movement, and it has a xenophobic side. I think people nowadays are probably more threatened than we ever were. There was never a threat, we never felt in danger. I know one of our colleagues, it was Herb Hoffman, went to Algeria from the Arabic language school and I think they had to evacuate if I'm not mistaken, from Algiers. But no, that was never a serious problem.

Q: In fact a series of Arabic countries cut relations on us for a while.

WEISLOGEL: Oh yes, which Morocco never did. We did not break relations. They did not break relations with us.

Q: Were you ever hearing while you were there, I served in Saudi Arabia which is, of course, a whole different matter, 'why did you recognize Israel, why do you support Israel?'

WEISLOGEL: Oh yes. You get it from friends, just talking with people that you'll meet at a reception or just get to talk to in other circumstances. Yes, they don't understand and I don't think the Arabs will ever understand why we are so unbalanced. Especially when we protest, of course, that we are balanced because it's a blatant lie. I mean, we're not. There's no question about it. We don't have an evenhanded policy. But all Arabs, I mean Arabs here in the United States, resent it — people I've seen in the United States and talked with about the problem.

Q: Could you look somebody in the eye and say, 'Look we are a democracy, the Jewish vote is very important in the United States and the politicians respond to this, and there it is?'

WEISLOGEL: Oh yes, but also I'm not convinced that that even is a logical argument because when you talk about the Jewish people, you talk about five percent of the population.

Q: Oh, I know it's very small.

WEISLOGEL: It's just that it's balanced in a particular way. The concentrations are such that there is influence. Also, of course, influence in certain professions which they're very dominant in. And everybody knows that the Arabs are as aware of it as we are.

Q: Particularly the media and the literary field.

WEISLOGEL: The media, the papers, sure. Right. I must say that at least the people that I was likely to talk with on a regular basis just didn't bring the subject up that much. I think it was a given. It's one of those things, you can't fight it. This is just the way you are. They might interpret it just that you're pro-Israel and anti-Arab. I mean, that's the way of the world. One of these days we may get even, but they kind of shrug their shoulders and say it doesn't look like it's in the cards because they know as well as we do they can't get their act together. You've heard a lot about Pan-Arabism. You remember that Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria were going to form a union. That went on the whole time I was there and nothing serious ever came of it.

Q: Was the base there, Kenitra, the naval base?

WEISLOGEL: Oh yes, Kenitra was there the whole time I was there.

Q: Did that rub nerves wrong there?

WEISLOGEL: There was always an element that was saying let's get the foreigners out, let's get rid of the naval base, but there were an awful lot of Moroccans who were employed by the naval base, and they would have lost their jobs. Of course, eventually

it was disbanded. They were there when I first arrived, I can't remember when the air base down around Marrakech left. Whether it was before or after I did. But the idea was that eventually these were going to go. That was in the cards. We probably didn't need it anymore.

Q: Were there any other major occurrences that I may have missed that happened while you were there in those five years?

WEISLOGEL: There probably are, and I just can't think. If somebody could mention events I might respond to them, but I really can't recall.

Q: Well, if something comes up, you can always add it in.

WEISLOGEL: There was a lot going on when I was working in the economic area in phosphates, one of the things that I followed with great interest. The phosphate industry. Morocco was the largest exporter of phosphates in the world and the US is, of course, the largest producer, but we don't export as much because we use most of it ourselves. It's funny, too, the next post I had was Togo and that was also a major phosphate producer.

Q: Did phosphates go up and down a lot as far as demand.

WEISLOGEL: Well, actually, they had a pretty steady market for what they produced, but of course this was where the Spanish Sahara came in because they also had this deposit, the deposit of phosphates, and if Morocco could acquire control over the Spanish Sahara, they would have a big corner on the world market of phosphates. So it was a very important issue. It wasn't just the fact that they had these long-term sentimental ties with the Spanish Sahara. There was a very distinct monetary value to the place. I have to smile when you think of how you work on some of these subjects for years and years and years and nothing every happens. I mean you talk to the desk officer 15 years later, and they still have the same problems.

The head of the Phosphate board, head of the Phosphate industry in Morocco, was a quasi-governmental body and a very bright and very capable man, but there was always a lot of politics involved in the phosphate industry and the running of it. I remember that we had an interest in selling because we sold them big drag lines that they used to scrape out the phosphate. It was open pit mining. That was an important thing which was always on the front burner while I was there. How the phosphate industry was doing and what equipment they needed to buy and who was running the thing and if it was being run efficiently. What it was contributing to the economy of the country. How the money was being used once it got into the country.

Q: But we weren't in particular competition or anything?

WEISLOGEL: No.

Q: So this was more a watching brief than anything else?

WEISLOGEL: It was a watching brief, and it also meant a lot to the country and how it was doing. And the economy was probably a lot better. Morocco and Moroccans are a lot better than nine-tenths of the developing world. They do have something to work with, but it is still a disappointment to a lot of Moroccans who expected a lot more from independence. But that could be said of most of the countries that became independent.

Q: How about the role of the French?

WEISLOGEL: Very dominant.

Q: Did you find that we were either rivals or was this a problem ?

WEISLOGEL: We didn't even try to attempt to outshine the French. It was just generally understood that the French are dominant in Morocco. That's their sphere of influence if you can use that old-fashioned phrase. And they had the inside track, very obviously. We

had some business interests that we were trying to promote. We did have the base that we were interested in keeping at that time. But the French were embedded. If I am not mistaken, there were more French in Morocco after independence than there had been before. Because a lot of the Pied Noirs who had lived in Algeria moved to Morocco. It was considered a great place to live. They were attracted to it, and they performed a lot of useful functions. Sometimes the advisors that you talked to in the government if they were technicians, turned out to be French.

Q: And then you moved to Togo?

WEISLOGEL: The reason that I went to Togo...I was already assigned to come back to the United States because I had been overseas for 12 years. I was already assigned to (of all things) the exchange program again. I was very unhappy with the assignment. But before I even had a chance to do anything, the Ambassador (actually he was DCM, Charg# d'affaires) in Morocco called me in and showed me the telegram that he had written asking for me to be assigned as his DCM in Togo. Now I had no idea....

Q: This was Dwight Dickinson?

WEISLOGEL: Yes. I had no idea that he even valued my work that much. Naturally, I had seen him all the time, we worked together but not closely. He was more on the political side. But anyway, I accepted and that is how I got to Togo.

Q: You went to Lome, the capital of Togo, where you served as Deputy Chief of Mission from '70 to'73. What was the political situation in Togo while you were there?

WEISLOGEL: The political situation was that we had a president, President Eyadema, and he had been president, well, it was one of the longest reigns in the African world. He had unfortunately disposed of his predecessor, it was quite a story, President Olympio, who was the first president of Togo. The story goes that President Eyadema had been a sergeant in the French army. He came out of the boonies. He came out of Lamacada from

a different tribe than Olympio. He did pretty well in the French army, got to be a sergeant, and he applied to go to officers' school. He was turned down by the President. In those days the President had to pass on those assignments. He held a grudge against him and one evening (President Olympio lived in a house next to the American embassy), Eyadema or some of his henchmen came after him and Olympio to escape them went over the fence into the American embassy parking lot and crawled into one of the cars that was open, but they got to him and they murdered him. And, of course, Eyadema never personally took credit for it, at least not in public. But it was just generally known that this is what happened. Then he put in another man, I think his name was Grunitzky, who was the product of a Polish father and a Togolese mother and he was president for a while, but Eyadema was back there pulling the strings. Then Eyadema took over himself and he was president and still is. He started off actually being rather benign. When I was there, we sort of felt that he was doing his best for the country given his own personal limitations, and of course he was surrounded with French advisors. Togo was quite different from the countries which had been colonies. It was a German colony up until the First World War. After the First World War it was turned into a mandate of the League of Nations and them became a trust territory of the UN until independence. But the French had administered it as a trust territory and their presence was unchallengeable. For instance, the French ambassador was automatically Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. It did not go according to seniority, the time that the ambassador was present in the country. But getting back to the way he ran the country, he was trying to build roads. We really felt he was using money wisely up until a certain point, but he did have the single political party called the RPT and they held elections if you can call it that. But you had a single slate to choose from, you know, what you'd expect from those countries in Africa which had similar systems. Then he decided to build a great new headquarters for the RPT and up went this enormous building. Then he began having the international conferences there. I remember we had OCAM while I was there, the Organization of the French Speaking Countries of Africa, and of I guess it was the west coast and central Africa. He began a campaign to have people adopt native names instead of French names. Many, many of the Togolese either

had English or French first names, given names, and many were Christian or Christian with certain overlaying of their original animism, but that has since become, if not law, at least the practice. I guess anybody who wanted to get anywhere had to adopt an African name. And he's tightened his grip. He got rid of people he thought were threats against him. We knew of some very, very fine people in the government and in the military and he gradually got rid of anyone who was seen as being too friendly with Europeans possibly of democratic persuasion. They were eliminated not very kindly, not pleasantly. They played hard-ball. And then of course it happened after I left, just about four or five months after I left. but I remember he went up to his hometown of Lamacada in a military plane, a DC-3 I think it was, with a French pilot. In fact, I knew the pilot, he was a Commandant Major in the French army. They crashed, but the president came out alive. After that they practically turned him into a saint. They've got a big monument, I understand, where the plane went down and where he emerged alive. Most of the people on the plane were killed. A cult of personality has developed and here you are talking about a man who has a very rudimentary education, a very rudimentary understanding of the world.

Q: How did we deal with him while you were there?

WEISLOGEL: With respect. We had an aid program. It wasn't a specific country aid program, we left that to the French. This was a regional program and what we were running was a regional road maintenance training center. But it happened to be in Lome and we had an aid officer stationed there and they brought students from French speaking African countries in to learn how to operate road machinery and how to design roads and build and maintain them. That was one of the projects we had. We had a very active and very effective Peace Corps. They did a wonderful job. They really did. They were working an English language instruction, basic health education particularly directed at women. That was very effective. And they were doing things like building small dams, digging wells, trying to get potable water into villages so that poor women didn't have to walk 10 kilometers in each direction with buckets on their heads and in their hands while carrying baby on the back in order to get water into the villages. And a lot of those were working

very, very well. And again, they had the phosphate industry which was the big industry, if you can call it that. Mining, open-pit mining but it didn't directly affect us. We kept an eye on it, we were interested, but again, they exported. That was one of their sources of foreign currency. They also exported things like cocoa. They exported far more than they grew because it was brought over from Ghana in head loads across the boarder by smugglers because the support price was better than it was in Ghana. And they were trying to develop tourism, and they were getting some Europeans, particularly Germans and Scandinavians. They would come down because of the sunshine and the sea was right there. Not the best swimming. It didn't have all the attributes for tourism that Morocco has for instance. Morocco had a fascinating culture, an indigenous culture, and buildings — their mosques, their old cities were fabulous. You didn't have anything like that in a place like Togo. It was very, very limited. Even culturally it didn't have a great civilization like the Nigerians did in Benin or the Ashanti did in Ghana. It was nothing like that in Togo.

Q: What were American interests there as you saw them?

WEISLOGEL: American interests were basically to show the flag. I don't really think that you could say much more for it. Shortly after I left the British ambassador was pulled out. I think they kept a regional ambassador who operated out of Dahomey. We had a United Nations mission there and they were doing various projects. I don't even recall anymore what they were but one of the big projects, it wasn't part of the UN, but they built the Volta dam on the Volta River in Ghana, not too far up from the river's mouth and they were supposed to supply electricity from the dam to Togo and Dahomey now beneath. That project was working, that is they had an engineer associated with the UN who was working on that project exclusively. Whether the system of distribution ever materialized, I don't know because traditionally Togo and Benin were at each other's throats, and Benin had a government that kept changing. They were rivals. But with Eyadema there was no change there and no possibility of change, he kept a tight, tight, control. Our interests in those days were primarily to keep China out of the UN. Remember that? It went on for years and years and years. Well, many countries had representatives whose primary job was to hang

on to the vote against China in the United Nations and to try to get their votes in the UN for other issues that we were interested in.

Q: Okay, you must have been Charg# from time to time. Did you get involved with Ambassador Dickinson? How did we pursue, or offer, or what...

WEISLOGEL: We just went up and we made the pitch that was handed to us by the State Department. I mean, told them that this is important for various reasons, and of course it could affect the friendly relations that we are maintaining with their country, which usually means money of one kind or another, or technical assistance. We weren't big in the country on technical assistance, but there was something there and every little bit helped in a country that was basically very poor and short on resources.

Q: How did they respond?

WEISLOGEL: For a long time it was rather easy going for us because they had a nationalist Chinese ambassador in Lome for long after most of surrounding countries had established diplomatic relations with Communist China. China still had a nationalist ambassador He'd been there for years and years and years. He even had an adopted daughter, a Togolese daughter, and again I think it was shortly after I left they changed their allegiance. The Chinese ambassador was expelled. That is nationalist Chinese. They established relations with Communist China and Communist China, I've forgotten, probably offered to build a football stadium or something like that. It was something as mundane as that. We had a very amusing diplomatic setup in Togo. There were only about eight or nine countries that had diplomatic relations and actually had resident ambassadors. You had of course France, Germany the United States, England (UK) and I think Ghana and Nigeria. And then you had the nationalist Chinese ambassador who was not the Dean, he would have been the Dean because he was there the longest except that the Frenchman was the Dean. But when the Frenchman was away, the Chinese became the Dean. You had the Soviet Union, we had Egypt, we had a UAR Charg# d'affaires,

in those days it was called the United Arab Republic and Israel. Of course Israel had no interest there either except for the votes on the Israeli issues in the United Nations and his job was to maintain that. We had some of the most peculiar diplomatic dinners particularly when they were offered by the Togolese government because, just alphabetically you had the Russians and the United States and the UAR all sitting at the end. We couldn't talk to the Egyptian at that stage, and our relations with the USSR were very strained to say the least, and the Israeli was not recognized by anyone except the United States and the Brits at that stage. So you had this peculiar situation where a lot of people weren't talking to other people and I remember once as the Charg#, I think the Israeli ambassador was leaving and I was organizing this farewell thing because the Frenchman was away and the nationalist Chinese could not really operate too well because he had to deal with other countries that he wasn't recognized by. Everybody knew what you were doing in town, so here we were meeting at the only major hotel and planning this reception and it would be known what were we up to. So I remember calling the Russian and telling him exactly what we were doing so the rumors wouldn't fly. I said look, I don't think you'd be interested in coming to this party. It's for the Israeli. But we had funny situations like that. And at the same time the Russian was one of the most attractive. He and his wife had served in the United States in one of their consulates, back when they had consulates, and they were a couple of the most attractive and enjoyable people that you'd want to meet. It was just too bad that we weren't allowed to socialize on an informal basis.

Q: How did we look at that time in that part of Africa on the "Soviet Menace."

WEISLOGEL: Most of the countries had socialist governments in one form or another and there was a lot of sympathy for some of the communist ideas simply because they were searching for something that would make their situation better. Communism wasn't going to do it but they'd tried other things and failed so it was tempting, it was tempting to a lot of young people. I think you had a lot of radical elements, as we called them in those days, in the university and we ourselves were trying to hold the line on several issues. As you know, a lot of the black African countries were rather sympathetic. They either had

large Muslim populations or, for one reason or another, they were getting money from the Saudis and from others who had money — the Libyans. They were pushing hard for votes against Israel at the United Nations and here we were trying to demand votes in favor of our positions on those issues. That, and communist China were the two things I remember as being the big issues and that was why we were there.

Q: It does seem awfully peripheral doesn't it?

WEISLOGEL: It does now. Now, after all the things that have happened. Of course the Israelis are still with us. But even that is changing in its form a great deal. But the Russian/ Soviet issue is out the window.

Q: China we've recognized.

WEISLOGEL: And China we've recognized, sure.

Q: What about the subject of the Peace Corps? I would have thought the French would be unhappy with having people teaching English and that sort of thing.

WEISLOGEL: They didn't mind at all, I'll tell you. They were in the English teaching business themselves. Actually, a very good friend of mine, a person I still keep in touch with who is in France now, is a French woman who studied English in the United States and was a teacher of English in France. She had the opportunity to go to Togo to teach English at the university level because she was qualified only to teach up through secondary school in France. So she took it and she spend a number of years in Togo and she was paid for by the French government to teach English at the university level in Togo. I understand from her, and this was many years after that, she said that we are no longer in the business of teaching English, but they were for the longest time. No, we had no problems with our Peace Corps running, they even had some sort of French cooperants, they were people I think who were in the military who were helping on various projects but they were a little different than the Peace Corps. I mean they were people who were sort

of army recruits who were trained in more technical areas, I believe. So we didn't run into the English speaking union. They had a few teachers in Togo.

Q: How about whatever our efforts were with the problem of corruption which is endemic in that area?

WEISLOGEL: You don't find it so much where you don't have American business firms operating. There was very little American business interest there. We did have, though, one case of an American black woman. She had left the United States and decided to live in Africa because she thought that this would be a better, happier environment for her. She faced prejudice, I think. She came from Chicago, and conditions could be pretty bad there. So she just opened up a little inn and she had a business of dressmaking and a few things like that. Something went wrong with it. I think they said she owed more taxes than she had the money for and they were going to put her in jail. She got smuggled out of Togo with certain assistance, because otherwise she would have been in jail there for the rest of her life. Of course if she'd paid off the right people and all she probably could have gotten herself out of it, but she didn't or she wasn't savvy enough to do that sort of thing, or she just didn't have the money. I don't know what the problem was but she left the country eventually. She had no alternative. But, oh yes, also you have human rights violations. We knew that people were beaten up when they were caught by the police, especially petty thieves, people that they'd grabbed who'd been caught in a robbery or something like that. You could pass the jail and hear the hollers, they'd beat them up. They didn't fool around, you didn't challenge the authority if you knew what was good for you. Also we had no problems with crime, very, very little. No murders, nothing like that, it was practically unheard of.

Q: How did Dwight Dickinson use you as a DCM?

WEISLOGEL: He was a political reporter. He did most of the political reporting and handling of those reports and I did just about anything else. I supervised the consular,

economic commercial officers and then when the Peace Corps director was away, I went over and I worked on Peace Corps things. And when the USIA director was away, I'd work on the USIS business and I loved it. I mean that's the sort of thing I like to do. I like to be in to everything.

Q: What was your impression of the Peace Corps volunteers that you met?

WEISLOGEL: Superb, with very few exceptions. Well, this was the age, too, of the hippie movement in the United States, maybe lingering. But in any case marijuana was still very much in the forefront of activity and we did have a Fourth of July party where unbeknownst to me a Peace Corps volunteer had grown her own marijuana in her back yard and was passing out brownies that were made with marijuana. But she was choosing her people carefully, I mean she didn't offer any to me but unfortunately for her she picked the young brother and sister-in-law of one of our officers and didn't know that they were connected with the embassy or embassy personnel in any way. They were given some of these things and realized what they were. The news spread around and she got thrown out of the country because it was against the law and of course she shouldn't have been doing it. She was one of these spaced-out types. But actually most of them were hard working very, very good people and I have seen since then that a lot of the Peace Corps volunteers that I knew of have gone into politics. They're even serving in Congress. I can't name any names just offhand but some have. Oh yes, they always retained their interest in service and in that type of social conditions in foreign countries. I think they were very good, I can't say enough for them.

Q: How about South Africa and apartheid and all. Did it come up a lot and how were we seen?

WEISLOGEL: That was of course one of the things where I suppose they were trying to get our votes against South Africa but there again it was mostly lip service. You go into the stores, you find canned goods that came from South Africa on the shelves. The same

thing was true when I visited Zaire and a few other places when I was inspecting. It was an open secret. And in the case of Zaire, the train that carried the copper out of the copper mines had to go though South Africa to get to the ports. So it was observed in the breech. It was a political thing — that all of them had to pay lip service.

Q: And rightly so, as a cause.

WEISLOGEL: Oh sure, it's like apple pie and motherhood, you can't knock it.

Q: Well then you came back to Washington at last. I guess I finally caught up with you where you served from '73 to '77 in North African Affairs. Where did North African Affairs fit? As something that keeps moving around, where was it?

WEISLOGEL: Well, when I first arrived, it was in the African bureau. And then as you know we had problems where Kissinger was trying to find a solution to the Arab-Israeli disputes. And of course naturally he was very much trying to involve Morocco and Algeria. Morocco was much more cooperative, Algeria was very much playing hard to get. We had other interests there too that we didn't have in Morocco, namely the oil and LNG but that's another story. But it got to be logistically very difficult because you would write position papers and contribute to them and you constantly had to go back and forth between North Africa and Middle Eastern areas for clearances, just for consultations. So finally, I think it must have been in the spring of 1974 or thereabouts, they moved North African Affairs into the NEA bureau and that's when they moved Turkey and Cyprus, or maybe it was just Turkey and Greece. They moved them from the Middle East to Europe where they are now.

Q: Now what consisted of North Africa? What were you dealing with?

WEISLOGEL: When I first came in I was Algerian Desk Officer and Morocco back up. That's the way it was or maybe it was Moroccan officer and Algerian back up, because I dealt with both of them. In any case, George Lane, by the way, was the Algerian and I

was the Moroccan. I worked on the Desk for two years — the regular desk officer duties, the usual things. Of course it was hectic as you can imagine at that time with Kissinger embarking upon his efforts; his missions. Then after two years I think Marshall Wiley became Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. They didn't have somebody to head up the NEA/AF affairs (North African Affairs) so they asked me to take over. I did, and then I stayed on an extra year. So I had 5 years all told in that area of the NEA.

Q: First on Algeria and then Morocco. What were your main issues?

WEISLOGEL: The big thing in Algeria, besides of course trying to keep them cooperative when it came to intercessions with Syria and Iraq and so forth over Israel, it was LNG. There are two things in my whole career in NEA, in North African Affairs, that I became an expert on. One was the Polisario and the Sahara. I knew every Oasis in that part of the desert and the other one was liquefied natural gas because at that time this was to be a tool that was being encouraged, that our companies would go in there and establish plants which would liquefy. The Algerians would own the plants but our companies would provide the expertise and develop and build them, and then a fleet of tankers would carry the liquefied gas to the United States where it would be put into pipe lines and turned back, regassified, and distributed. We had at one time four companies that were busy with these projects. I went down to a ship launching for El Paso Natural Gas Company. I went down to one of the launchings of their first ship that was designed specifically to carry natural gas to the United States. They were going to build a liquidisation facility off-shore from Chesapeake Bay and put it through the pipe lines from there. The whole thing eventually collapsed. I think there was one company in New England which already was working with a French company and I think they did carry some gas to the United States. Maybe they still are. None of the others ever got off the ground. None of the others did because they were afraid that after the oil embargo that we could not be assured of a supply. Every time that they got annoyed at us for something that they might cut off the gas supply and then we would be left high and dry. That is really why the whole thing fell through. That's the

short of it. It went on and on in negotiations, the talks back and forth. They went on for years. They were still going on when I left.

Q: How did you find the Algerians as far as....

WEISLOGEL: Algerians are tough. Boy are they tough. They are very tough to deal with but I like I must say that at that time I got the feeling that they were very business like, they were trying to clean up their act, that they did not tolerate corruption. They were idealistic. They wanted to make the country work. It wasn't the most pleasant place to be assigned. It was a rough assignment to be in Algiers. As I said, the people are not especially warm or friendly to anyone. It's not just Americans. I think that is just the way they are. When you know them individually they are fine. I traveled several times in Algeria. I traveled with another woman. Drove all over the place. Never had any problems. I mean, they were great that way. They could have been nasty if they wanted to. They knew that we were Americans. They knew that we were diplomats, but they always respected us.

Q: What were your impressions of dealing with American businesses, oil companies?

WEISLOGEL: I was actually asked at one stage, and this was after I was out of the bureau I was by then in Scientific Affairs but there were some law suits going on. I think the Algerians were suing an American company which they felt had not fulfilled its commitments in producing this. It had to do with an LNG plant. I don't really remember anymore how much detail I knew. But there was certainly legitimate suspicion that perhaps American companies were charging too much for what they were not doing. There might have been shenanigans going on, I don't know, corruption of one kind or another. They just did not produce the plant that was working. They felt that their engineering was very faulty. Actually I knew people from various companies and someone that I did talk to at some stage did say that the company that the Algerians had chosen in bidding were not qualified to do what they said they were going to do. That they had never built a LNG plant before. They did other types of engineering. I think that the Algerians probably had

some legitimate complaints and I was asked to testify by the American law firm that was representing the Algerians. I took it to L (L being the legal section of the Department of State) and they said no. So I did not testify. Not that what I had to say would have made that much difference. Those were the days when Mr. Kleindienst was working with the Algerians whose law firm he was representing, I don't know whether on that particular dispute because I think that was a New York firm. But he was doing a lot of work trying to put together deals with American firms to go in and to get involved.

Q: Kleindienst had been Attorney General under Nixon.

WEISLOGEL: Attorney General, yes. Very nice man. He used to come into the office every once and a while and we went down to the LNG tanker launching together. Fascinating person. But the Algerians always bought the best legal advice, they went for the best. They knew who was plugged into the American hierarchy and they had the money to pay for it in those days. They were living well on their oil assets, and they did things properly, unlike the Moroccans.

Q: Tell me about the Moroccans and the Polisario thing because in other interviews that I've had this is a very peculiar thing. You have some very ardent Polisario supporters. In the United States it became sort of the in thing for the arty liberal crowd.

WEISLOGEL: Oh really. It was sort of a blatant case. Remember the Green March where the King got all of these people, a lot of them were civilians, all geared up and excited about it? They were told that the Spanish were relinquishing the control of the Spanish Sahara, and the ideal was that the country should decide for itself whether they should join Mauritania, join Morocco or become independent. I don't think that it was ever a question of joining Algeria. Algeria was pulling strings. They did have this march and they went down there and laid claim to it. But the Polisario, who were the people who wanted an independent Sahara, were being financed and armed by the Algerians who of course had their arguments with Morocco. I mean the two countries had been on poor terms for

a long, long while. Even while I was there. There were periods of time when you could not cross the border, you couldn't cross the border easily between Algeria and Morocco. Planes from Morocco could not fly over Algeria and Libya. They had to go up to Europe and come back down again. I was on one of those flights one time, and I thought that I was being kidnaped, but we had to go to Geneva from Cairo to get to Rabat. Naturally, it created quite a bit of an uproar even in the UN and among people who felt that the Saharans had the right to decide where they belonged. The whole thing was rather a silly dispute because you're talking in a large part about a very unsophisticated populace, many of whom were nomads who don't stay in any one place and who cross borders. There are no lines on the sand. They cross borders all the time with their herds and it's basically only the people who worked around the phosphate mines and who had established themselves in these little tiny oasis cities who perhaps had some sort of political consciousness. The King based his claim on the fact that this area had been a traditional purveyor of tribute to the monarch of Morocco over centuries which at some time or other probably was true. I mean you had tribal gifts that were sent from all over the place because at one time Morocco was much larger, its sphere of influence was larger.

Q: What was our policy towards..

WEISLOGEL: Oh we had to keep out of it, we were neutral on the subject except that Algeria voted far less frequently with us in the United Nations and it was generally a thorn in our side, whereas Morocco was much more compliant. We were sort of neutral, in favor of Morocco and it came out we did not provide them arms specifically to use against the Polisario in the Spanish Sahara, but we did have arms sales to Morocco which we didn't have with Algeria nor did we with Libya. So in that sense we were supporting them and we could more often count upon their vote on issues in the United Nations in return.

Q: Did you find that there were people in congress, staffers, who were ardent Polisario supporters?

WEISLOGEL: No, I don't recall ever getting any flack from the stuff that appeared in newspapers. Newspaper columnists felt rather strongly, but I don't recall ever getting anything from congress. I think it might have come up at some stage in connection with the human rights issues, when we had to do reports on the human rights in every one of the countries that we dealt with and, of course, sometimes they felt this moral failure on the part of Morocco should appear somewhere in the report. I don't think it did, I don't really remember anymore.

Q: Did Kissinger have any interest in things there?

WEISLOGEL: Kissinger was interested in the Middle East negotiation. I lose no love for Mr. Kissinger. I think he was basically a very selfish, mean man. He may have been brilliant, but he was a dreadful person to work with. And I can tell you the people I really admired. I think Roy Atherton is absolutely the top. I think Richard Parker, who was our ambassador for a short while in Morocco and then in Algeria, was absolutely first rate, they're just marvelous people. Hal Saunders was there when I was there. I had a great deal of respect for him, thought he was great. And I know Joe Sisco is controversial but I liked him, I got on well with him, and Phil Habib was a peach. I remember briefing him once on the Polisario. The first thing Atherton said to me — he said better bring along a map. I got my good old Michelin map. Best maps that were ever made of Africa. And he said he'll want to know where places are because he doesn't know the geography of this area, which was no failure on his part because who did. So I remember briefing him and telling him at that time where the Polisario lines were and what the relation was with Mauritania and how they fit into the picture, and I had the utmost respect for him, great guy. But Kissinger, I still remember a few things. I remember the first time I went up with Roy Atherton. You see, when we moved from African Affairs, in African Affairs you had lots of people who spoke French. But when you got up into where you had your Middle East Bureau they knew Arabic a lot of them, but they didn't have French and they needed a note taker who knew French because when Kissinger spoke with people using

French like the Algerians and Moroccans, he felt that his French was good enough so they could understand what was coming to him. But he used an interpreter to talk to them in French which is always easier, I think, to understand than to speak so I was brought along because I understood the French, and I could take the notes of the conversations. That's the only reason I was there because normally anything lesser than a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State would not cast his shadow upon Henry Kissinger like Brahmans in India, their paths will not be crossed by the untouchable. So any way, I was brought in. The first thing he saw was this stranger. He didn't like strangers, he wanted familiar faces around him and he just sort of pointed to me from across the room and he said who's “dat” in his German accent and Atherton very graciously introduced me. Told him who “Dat” was. I mean it was little things like that. Then I remember being out on the balcony at the State Department on the eighth floor where we were waiting, this was to be a luncheon and I was taking the notes again at this luncheon with the Algerians and the Moroccans. He always waited until everyone was assembled before he made his appearance. All of the foreign guests and everyone. I was standing there with Alec Toumayan who was the interpreter and sort of at the end of the group and Kissinger came over. Some of the people he recognized shook hands with him. He was introduced to some of the foreign guests that he hadn't met. Then when he got to where Alec and I were standing he just turned on his heels and walked away, he could care less about us, we were peons. It was that sort of thing which to me is the sign of a very small man. And he was secretive, he'd have meetings with people and he wouldn't tell me and I wouldn't know what was going on. Eventually maybe some of the stuff would trickle down. I depended upon a few very helpful sources to let me know what went on in meetings because it was directly concerned with what I was doing. I mean you can't operate if you don't know what's been said to the foreign person in the private office. He was obsessed with keeping everything secret and it became ridiculous.

Q: How about Qadhafi?

WEISLOGEL: Oh, that was the other problem that never went away. I forgot about Libya, how could I forget. Did you ever hear the story about the C -130s?

Q: Yes. We had a whole bunch parked somewhere.

WEISLOGEL: Yes. Martin Marietta had built the planes, Libya had ordered them.

Q: I saw them down outside of Atlanta Martin Marietta.

WEISLOGEL: As far as I know they're still there, but that problem went on long, long after I had left.

Q: Could you explain what the problem was?

WEISLOGEL: Libya, before our relations fell apart, before we withdrew our embassy from Libya, were good customers for American goods and we didn't sell them hard armaments. But we did sell them things like airplanes and pipelines and things, oil field equipment. But they had ordered a large number of C-130s.

Q: These are large transport four-engine transport planes.

WEISLOGEL: Big transport planes and actually they have use, with their country so far flung I think it's something like the third largest country in Africa, they have a legitimate need for the planes and for transporting materials and all, but of course Libya was into everything. If you recall, Qadhafi was supporting the Chadians and the revolutionary movements in Chad and they were involved with the Sudan. Everywhere where mischief was going on they were there. This was Qadhafi in his prime. And so when we broke relations we said no. The planes could not go because they are capable of being transformed into military aircraft. You could arm them and they could be used to transport all sorts of things, tanks and everything else. That's what they were designed to do in the States, so we put a hold on them. But they'd already paid for the planes, so they were

trying to get the planes from us, and this went on and on. We kept saying no and we were adamant until the end but there were position papers written on it and, of course, the company was putting terrible pressure upon us. I don't know whether they were fully paid for. I think they were. But then they were stuck with all these airplanes that were deteriorating on the ground and kind of hard to unload.

Q: Didn't somebody say that we need them for the US military.

WEISLOGEL: No. I guess the military didn't need them or they wanted to sell more airplanes. They didn't want to give them planes that were already sold so they just kept them. And they were being kept on the ground and were costing a lot of money to maintain. You just can't leave them sitting there, they have to be looked after properly. I left long before the problem was resolved and I don't think it ever was. They never went to Libya, that I know. I think eventually they may have been sold off to other countries or other purchasers, but that was one of our big problems while I was there. In general, Libya was supporting the Irish Republican Army and there were even stories about them being involved in an attempt to make a hit on the American Ambassador in Egypt. They were involved in that.

Q: Did you become aware or were we trying anything to, I think the term was, neutralize Qadhafi.

WEISLOGEL: We were always trying to neutralize Qadhafi. On the basis of intelligence information that we had acquired, we were informing other countries of some of the nefarious deeds that Qadhafi was planning to carry out against anybody who was not in favor of his revolutionary ideas of how the world should be organized. Of course he was at the same time a very simple man, again he's one of these leaders who really isn't aware of the sophistications of the world. He also is a devout Muslim but of the very fundamentalist persuasion which actually is spreading in many parts of the Arab world and is causing concern, but he was one of the earliest purveyors of that particular philosophy.

He also had his little green book that he wrote that set forth all of his ideas and he would distribute this widely. I had a copy of that for a long time. I wonder what became of it? Anyway we did attempt to neutralize him, just by figuring out what he was going to do next and warning some of the people who were his targets, friendly countries or countries that maybe that weren't so friendly but that might be interested in the information, as a result might be a little more cooperative. But that was a continuing problem the whole time I was in North African Affairs.

Q: How about Tunisia, did that bring any problems?

WEISLOGEL: No. The only problem I really remember, except for the fact that we kept trying to get them to vote with us on issues and it just depended I guess upon how Bourguiba felt that particular day, was that we just had to keep Bourguiba's obituary up to date. What was that called where you had to prepare in case a foreign leader died? You had to know which American would be expected to go to the funeral and so forth and we even had to draft a letter of condolence and that type of thing. That was updated constantly and of course Brigiva was just indestructible.

Q: You left that to go into the Inspection Corps from '77 to '80.

WEISLOGEL: Yes. That was fascinating.

Q: What areas did you work on particularly?

WEISLOGEL: All over the world, When I was first in the unit, we were interviewing people who were on assignment to other agencies of the US government but here in Washington. They had to have efficiency reports done on them. We went to see their supervisors and to see them in their workstations and try to put together the material you need for an efficiency report. Otherwise they might be left with a whole tour of duty that was not covered by an efficiency report. Then I went to Latin America. I got the high road Bolivia, and Ecuador and then, what was next? I know I did Central Africa, I did East Africa, part of

East Africa, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia — Ethiopia at a terrible time for them. It was when the killings were going on, kangaroo courts and it was dreadful time for them. I did Korea and Indonesia on a single inspection. All across Canada. I did all the consulates and constituent posts and Ottawa, except for Montreal and Quebec. Those were done by someone else. I also did Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Spain and Portugal.

Q: The role of the Inspection Corps changes all the time. Where would you say during the '77 to '80 period was their main emphasis?

WEISLOGEL: Main emphasis was on post management. That was the primary focus of our attention. How the post is being managed, how did the people who work at the post feel that they are incorporated into the objectives of the post, do you clearly understand what our purpose is in this particular country, are we in your eyes achieving it, do you feel satisfied in your work, is it fulfilling. Also, of course, you looked at the other side of things — family issues. That was when they were beginning to set up the family liaison offices, FLOs. That was in the early days of the FLOs, and I got a lot of the, I shouldn't use the term, but it's cats and dogs. In other words I often did consular...I usually did consular and/or commercial/economic but I very often took the other agencies. I would talk to the people in the USIA, Defense Attach#'s office, agriculture, FAA, if you have one like in Germany (that was another one I did, Germany), FAA representative and your Treasury representative. All those people. I often talked to CIA, quite often did them. Basically I think people say, “well what do you achieve? Do you turnover rocks and find all sorts of dreadful things crawling?” I said no. Basically I think we were an agent of comfort if you can call it that, listening in an impartial way to what people had to say. Very often I don't think we could do anything about problems unless they were grievous problems, mismanagement or downright cruelty, but we could listen to people and talk with them about their problems. I frankly think that's the biggest service that we performed. Of course, Sandy Mentor used to get after me. He said, “you're not tough enough.' He said 'you've got to get in there and you've got to be mean to them. You must find something wrong with these people and

what they're doing?" I said often there isn't basically anything wrong. They're doing a good job and I can't criticize them for what they're doing if they're doing it right.

Q: Looking over it, were there any episodes or problems that stood out?

WEISLOGEL: Yes. In Latin America we were getting the kids who got involved with dope smuggling. Some unbeknownst to themselves. They got hooked up with people. You know how kids travel, they link up with people. They found themselves acting as carriers for smugglers of dope and of course they were picked up. And those countries are rough on them. I mean they were in jails that you wouldn't keep your dog in. I remember seeing one down in Bolivia that was pretty grim, and seeing a girl who was in for a few years. She was very well educated, talented, she played the violin. She had a lot of accomplishments, but she just got mixed up in some situation that she couldn't get herself out of. You did see situations like that. I'm trying to think if there were any other particular problems. In a place like Cyprus of course you had the division of the country, which you still have, and it was a confining sort of place to be in.

Q: What was your impression of looking at the Foreign Service at this particular point in time?

WEISLOGEL: I think the first thing I noticed, and it was noticeable from the time I came in in '77 until I left in '80, when I went around to posts in the beginning when you were an inspector they really rolled out the red carpet. You had the feeling they were receiving you and wanting to make a good impression and that they wanted to get everything bright before you came. They naturally had warnings so they got everything in order and you were very well received and entertained and included in activities and social events which of course you wanted to be to get a feel for the place. That decreased considerably in three years time. There was a noticeable change.

Q: Why?

WEISLOGEL: I think a lot of it had to do with the feeling of spouses, that they did not want to be unpaid purveyors of hospitality ,and that people were leading their own lives much more. It isn't only my impression. We talked about it among ourselves, people who had been in the inspection service for sometime, many of them even longer than I had been, and they too remarked on the difference they noticed. People went their own way. They did their job and did them very, very well. More and more people were telling us that they really felt that these diplomatic receptions and big parties didn't accomplish anything, and usually it was men, but they would take their counterparts in the foreign ministry or in the other embassies out and have a luncheon in a restaurant. Of course, you could do that in some places; you couldn't do it everywhere. In some countries I know men who had household servants and a cook where the meal would be prepared. If there was a wife there she'd go off and do her own thing. They'd have their little stag luncheon at the home of the American officer but it wasn't a family occasion, it was strictly business. It reminded you more and more of the way business is conducted in our business world, in our corporations. The luncheon and the breakfast nowadays, they're big things. That's a tool, and this is more the way they regarded it. This purely social side of it I think has declined and in part I think it's because the wives are no longer willing to be paid servants and I can't blame them.

Q: What about the problems of malfeasance?

WEISLOGEL: I can't recall anything that was turned up by any of our inspection teams in the way they were handing out visas, you mean, and paying. I know that that occurred and had occurred in certain places, and we heard about it, but at any of the posts that I was in it did not occur. I'll tell you where it affected. Where the problem was a potential problem was in Guayaquil, Ecuador. I did the inspection report of Guayaquil and the morale was very poor. It's a hell hole. Frankly, in those days I'd also seen Somalia, and of the two I would have taken Mogadishu over Guayaquil any day of the week. But they said in Guayaquil the consular officers, the visa officers in particular, were so pressed they

said every time they would go out in the community they think they have made a friend locally, somebody that they find compatible, then a few weeks later the guy's asking for a visa for his uncle or for himself or for someone else or offering them something. They become so disillusioned with the local community they almost became withdrawn. They were sticking to themselves and making their own social gatherings, but they almost didn't want to stick their noses out of the door because they were harassed by these people who were trying to get to the United States. That was affecting them and it potentially could have been a problem if somebody had been weak, but nothing was turned up certainly on that occasion. I'm just trying to think of any other instances where, there were problems. I remember there was a problem in Munich with the supervising consular officer, but there it was more incompetence and just being beastly to people and morale being low and having a bad situation. One real bad problem, and they eventually closed the post anyway, was that they were planning to do so in Northern Zaire at Bukavu on the border with Burundi on Lake Kivu. They were both young men, both married, and I don't recall whether the senior of the two guys, one had the title of consul and the other was vice consul. Vice consul also ran the administration and knew French very well. They were very outgoing people and the consul and his wife were very withdrawn. They were quite obviously unhappy at having drawn this post and they sort of knew the local missionaries but that's all, they got into this clutch with the missionaries. So of course the vice consul was outshining the consul. They loved to entertain and they knew everybody in town, knew what was going on and of course the other guy just sort of huddled in his little corner and stayed to himself. The two of them hated each other and the wives hated each other and you can imagine, a two man post, not the best of situations. But eventually we wrote it up and I thought at the same time they would have had to do something if they kept the post open. The post was closed because we figured it wasn't performing any useful function. But that was bad. It was sort of pathetically funny at the same time. What a place for people not to get on. That's back and beyond, it really is one of the most isolated places you can go. We actually had to go up on a military flight. The air attach# out of Zaire arranged the schedule. We went commercial to Kisangani from Kinshasa but from there we would have had to wait a week

to get anything commercial, and then you're never sure that they're going or that you get on the plane even if you have tickets. So the air attach# took us up there but that was an experience.

Q: For your last tour you were in Scientific from '80 to '83. What were you doing there?

WEISLOGEL: I was Assistant Director of the Office of International Scientific Cooperation. I had by then decided I didn't want to go out again because of family. My father had died and my mother was alone. I'm an only child and I just felt it wasn't the time to go overseas. And this was getting close to the time, in fact, I think I'd overstayed my period in the States, but I did take this assignment in Scientific Affairs. I've always been interested in science, in fact I think I'm a geologist. I don't say that I would have gone into it if I had it to do all over again because I would have had to fill in with a lot of chemistry and physics and math that I just didn't have, but I have always liked scientific studies and so I felt this would be a good assignment. It would be interesting and it was. It wasn't the most interesting assignment I ever had, I think probably DCM in Togo and the inspection service, well I liked all of my work except for personnel work in Libya, but I liked all of my assignments. I enjoyed consular work, so I can't say that there was anything that I didn't like.

Q: What were you doing at S & T?

WEISLOGEL: We have S&T Science and Technology agreements with a number of countries in the world and every once in a while you'd get together you'd have meetings to try to exchange scientists or scientific information and they're all sorts. You're working with universities and with the National Academy of Sciences, the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health and the FDA. All of them get in the act somewhere or another, working with foreign countries, their counterparts in foreign countries. Sometimes it's an agreement about testing of, say, medicines. You know if you're going to recognize the testing that they did so that it can be more easily promoted to the United States by the companies that manufacture. That type of thing. It covered the board. There was no

limit to anything. If it had anything at all to do with science you were likely to get involved with it. I made one trip in that connection. We had an S & T agreement with Zimbabwe. I went to Harare and we were getting on very nice. I met a lot of people in the scientific community there and they were already in touch with people in the United States. We were supposed to be able to provide funding for them to come to the States to meet their counterparts or vice versa. Then there was a big vote in the United Nations and Zimbabwe voted against us and suddenly the funds just sort of evaporated. That was one handle we thought we had on them but it didn't always work. I can't remember whether it had to do with membership in the United Nations because...no South Africa was always there, I'm trying to think what the issue was we were fighting so hard on at the time. It definitely had something to do with...I don't think China was in then, no China was already well in.

Q: Could it have been Nicaragua or something like?

WEISLOGEL: No it wasn't South America. I think more likely had to do with Africa and maybe South Africa. South Africa, there were various things there, or it could have been something to do with Israel. Remember the Zionism, racism, it might have been that issue. That keeps coming up from time to time. I think that's what it was. It might have been, and in any case this was a frustration because of the S & T agreements. First of all you don't have a lot of funding to carry anything out. They get a lot of good ideas and then they turn to the government and say, 'well what can you do for us, could you give us some money so that we can carry this idea out?' and of course the money isn't there and they start scrounging around looking for funding from foundations and very often it's not forthcoming. I think they often raise hopes and then disappoint.

Q: You retired in '83?

WEISLOGEL: Yes, November '83.

Q: Well, looking back on this could you, as in retrospect, because I think it's particularly interesting, you've had a full career and all, what about the changing role or the difference in role of women in the Foreign Service from when you came in and when you left?

WEISLOGEL: I think when I came in women basically could not expect to diversify as much as they did later on. They were mostly budget and fiscal officers and disbursing officers and people in various aspects of administration, big in personnel, and, of course, the consular field. There were very few who moved into economic and political work let alone become DCMs or ambassadors, but over the years that has just profoundly changed and many of the women have really gotten to the top and distinguished themselves. My favorite is Rozanne Ridgway. I think she is an absolutely stunning example. She is marvelous. I knew her slightly, I never knew her very well.

Q: She later became Ambassador to Finland and to East Germany and then in charge of European Affairs and other posts and just recently retired and was considered one of our top, top diplomats.

WEISLOGEL: But that has been the major change and of course the changing role of the wives and the greater concern for spouses having employment opportunities, going so far as to have agreements with certain countries when their diplomats wives could work here in the United States. We should have the same opportunity there, quid pro quo. I think that was a very, very good move and I think it was thoroughly justified and I think necessary, if you're going to have any kind of a service at all, you're going to have to cater to those needs.

Q: Society has changed. This reflects what's happening in the United States.

WEISLOGEL: The other big change — a lot more minorities coming in. Some entered laterally and some through the regular examination. Equally good people on both sides. I think the people who entered through the exam system always felt a little sensitive

because they felt that many people regarded them as having entered the easy way. I mean they confused the two, they don't make a distinction, they lump them all into one heap, and I know some who were a little sensitive about that. They made a special point of saying I took the examination in such and such a year. So that was another major change. A lot more concern for amenities and people being happy on post. You got your regional doctors and regional psychiatrists and regional nurses and all that sort of thing, which is I guess okay. Frankly, I'd do without the psychiatrists and opt for first-class transportation or ship travel if I had my druthers, but then of course it just depends on one's needs.

Q: Well, I want to thank you very much, this has been fun, I've enjoyed it.

WEISLOGEL: It's been very nice. I've enjoyed it and enjoyed talking with you and, gosh there are a lot of things probably that I will think of when I get home. I finally remembered the name of the man that they kept looking in the glove compartments for and couldn't find — Ben Barka. Remember Ben Barka? He had taken refuge in France and then came back. He was a Moroccan dissident. He was a Moroccan who was anti-monarchy, but that was something, too. I remember about Richard Parker. I had a lot of respect for that man. He wrote the most wonderful cables, and he did not cater to the King which is why he lasted such a short time. Everybody else, every other American ambassador, both I guess before and during Tasca's tenure there and after with the exception of Parker, did everything possible to placate and curry favor with the King. And the King, of course, let's face it, people like to count the King as a friend, but Parker didn't give a damn and, of course, I think the King had always suspected him ever since he served in Algeria anyway and he got rid of him just as soon as he could do so decently. But Parker was marvelous. He told things like they were, he really did.

End of interview